

Syllabus for the course: Introduction to Game Design

A course for the undergraduate students of educational program “Media Communications”

Course type: elective (blended)

The part of course: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/game-design>

Course description

This course is an introduction to the primary concepts of gaming, and an exploration of how these basic concepts affect the way gamers interact with our games. In this course you will understand what defines a “game” and the mechanics and rules behind different types of games. Through four linked assignments you'll learn ways to create and describe a game concept, and specifically what makes a compelling game. This course focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of games, and all assignments can be completed with a pencil and paper – no previous programming knowledge is required.

Course Plan

1. The Simplest Games

What are the principles of very simple games, like Hangman and tic-tac-toe? How do these games work? Why do people play them? What are the elements that define games and the gaming experience? And finally, what do games have in common with each other, and what sets them apart? In addition to covering the basics and ground rules for this course, we'll conclude this week with a very simple, low-tech assignment: create a game on a single sheet of paper.

2. Rules and Discovery

How does a player learn the mechanics of your game? How do they learn anything about your game? This week we will talk about the rules that define gameplay, and how those rules are communicated to your players. We also discuss the way rules are bent and broken by players.

3. Tell a Story

How does narrative drive a player to start playing your game? Or to finish it? This week we'll look at some of the ways you can make your game more compelling with story, and discuss some of the ways story can drive gameplay forward, or enable a player to make their own way through it.

4. The Friend and the Enemy

What purpose does an enemy serve in a game? What effect does a second player have on two-player games? Can a game work without an adversary or a final goal? We'll address all of those questions in this last week of the class, and work towards finalizing your board game project with characters.

Reading List

a. Required

1. Katie S. Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals. The MIT Press, 2004 – URL: <https://library.books24x7.com/toc.aspx?bookid=7016>

b. Optional

1. Roger E. Pedersen. Game Design Foundations. Wordware Publishing, 2009 – URL: <https://library.books24x7.com/toc.aspx?bookid=32490>
2. Staffan Bjork and Jussi Holopainen. Patterns in Game Design, Charles River Media, 2004 – URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=415428>

Grading System

Cumulative grade according to 10-point system includes all the for required assignments. The cumulative grade will be determined in advance of the final exam. It includes percentages for the various activities as follows:

- Make a Simple Paper-Based Game – 25%
- Refining the Rules on Your Paper-Based Game – 25%
- Narrative Elements for Your Paper-based Game – 25%
- Multi-Player Paper-Based Game! – 25 %

When converting the grade into a 10-point grading system to determine the final result, the following formula will be applied.

Final grade is formed as follows:

- Cumulative grade – 80%;
- Final exam – 20%.

The final exam contains questions studied during online course.

To finish the course, you'll need to earn a passing grade on each of the required assignments—these can be quizzes, peer-graded assignments, or programming assignments. Videos, readings, and practice exercises are there to help you prepare for the graded assignments.

Within a course, there are suggested due dates to help you manage your schedule and keep coursework from piling up. Quizzes and programming assignments can be submitted late without consequence. However, it is possible that you won't receive a grade if you submit your peer-graded assignment after deadline.

After you submit your work, you'll be asked to review your classmates' assignments. To pass, you'll need to earn a passing grade on your submission and complete the required number of reviews.

You and your classmates will be asked to provide a score for each part of the assignment. Final grades are calculated by combining the median scores you received for each section.

Special Equipment and Software Support

Special equipment is not required.